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The Inverse Scattering Problem in Geometrical Optics and the Design of Reflectors

JOSEPH B. KELLER

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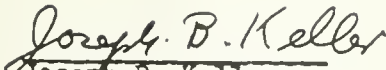
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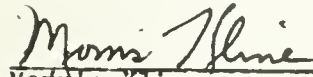
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THE INVERSE SCATTERING PROBLEM IN GEOMETRICAL
OPTICS AND THE DESIGN OF REFLECTORS

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Abstract

The inverse scattering problem considered here is that of finding the shape of a reflector which produces a prescribed scattered wave. The scattered wave is characterized by its angular pattern, which determines the differential scattering cross section of the reflector. The problem is solved by means of explicit formulas for cylindrical and for rotationally symmetric objects. Plane, cylindrical and spherical incident waves are considered. The general three dimensional object is also treated. The method of geometrical optics is used throughout.

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1. Introduction

When radiation of any type is incident upon an object some of the radiation is scattered in all directions by the object. The direct problem of the theory of scattering is that of determining the intensity of the radiation scattered in each direction when the properties of the incident radiation as well as those of the object are known. The inverse scattering problem is that of determining the properties of the scattering object when the incident radiation and the intensity of the radiation scattered in each direction are known. This latter problem has been studied extensively in atomic and nuclear physics by the methods of quantum mechanics and, to some extent, by classical mechanics^[1]. The classical mechanical solution is also applicable to the scattering of light (or other radiation obeying the laws of geometrical optics) by a region in which the index of refraction varies in any continuous spherically symmetric manner. We now propose to consider the inverse problem in geometrical optics when the scatterer is an opaque object, such as a piece of metal, with a definite boundary. We will call an object of this type a reflector or mirror.

In the two dimensional case, which we treat first, the scattered wave is cylindrical. Its intensity in the direction θ is denoted by $\sigma(\theta)$. When the incident radiation is a plane wave of unit amplitude, $\sigma(\theta)$ is called the differential scattering cross section of the reflector. We then find that the shape of the reflector is completely determined if $\sigma(\theta)$ and the reflection coefficient of the reflector are given. However the reflector may be placed so that either its concave or convex side is exposed to the incident radiation. When the incident radiation is a cylindrical wave a one parameter family of different reflectors is found. In both cases formulas for the shape of the reflector are obtained in terms of $\sigma(\theta)$. Similar results are obtained for reflectors which are surfaces of revolution in

three dimensions, when the incident radiation is either a plane wave incident along the axis of revolution or a point source on this axis.

In the general three dimensional case the differential scattering cross section $\sigma(\theta, \phi)$ and the reflection coefficient of the surface do not determine the shape of the reflector at all. However, if the differential scattering cross section is known for two plane waves incident from opposite directions, and if the reflection coefficient is also known, then the reflector is uniquely determined, provided that it is convex. But in this case it has not been possible to determine the shape explicitly. Instead a non-linear partial differential equation must be solved to find the shape.

Our investigation was pursued not only because of its intrinsic interest, but also because the results may be of use in the design of optical systems containing reflectors. This, as well as most design problems, may profitably be viewed as an inverse problem. For purposes of comparison we have also included some well-known results on the direct problem.

S. N. Karp has also treated certain inverse scattering problems for reflectors without restriction to the realm in which geometrical optics is valid.

2. Formulation and solution

In geometrical optics light propagates along rays which, in a homogeneous medium, are straight lines. Therefore by conservation of energy, in a non-absorbing medium, the flux of energy is the same through every cross section of each tube of rays. This flux is proportional to the light intensity I multiplied by the cross sectional area of the tube. In a cylindrical wave a tube of angular width $d\theta$ has a cross section of length $r d\theta$ so energy conservation yields $I r d\theta = \sigma d\theta$ where σ is constant along the tube. Thus $I = \frac{\sigma(\theta)}{r}$. Here σ is written as $\sigma(\theta)$ since it may vary from one tube to another. Now suppose the cylindrical wave is produced by

reflection from a reflector of an incident plane wave of unit intensity propagating from the left parallel to the x-axis. (See Fig. 1) Suppose the ray at height y is reflected in the direction θ , and that at height $y+dy$ is reflected in the direction $\theta+d\theta$. Let the energy reflection coefficient be R . Then of the incident energy between the two rays, which is proportional to dy , the fraction Rdy is reflected into the tube between the rays in the directions θ and $\theta + d\theta$. Thus by the conservation of energy

$$(1) \quad R dy = \pm \sigma(\theta) d\theta.$$

The sign in (1) must be chosen the same as that of $dy/d\theta$.

The reflection coefficient R may not be a constant, but may be a function of the angle of incidence. This angle is just $\theta/2$ since the normal to the reflector at each point bisects the angle between the incident and reflected rays at this point. Thus in (1), $R = R(\theta/2)$. If y and x are coordinates of a point on the reflector surface then the slope of the normal also leads to the equation

$$(2) \quad \frac{dy}{dx} = \cot \frac{\theta}{2}.$$

Equations (1) and (2) enable us to solve the inverse problem of finding the reflector shape in terms of $\sigma(\theta)$ and $R(\theta/2)$. For integrating (1) yields

$$(3) \quad y = y_0 \pm \int_0^\theta \frac{\sigma(\theta)}{R(\theta/2)} d\theta.$$

Elimination of dy from (1) and (2) and integration of the result also gives

$$(4) \quad x = x_0 \pm \int_0^\theta \frac{\sigma(\theta) \tan \frac{\theta}{2}}{R(\theta/2)} d\theta.$$

Equations (3) and (4) are parametric equations for the reflector and thus provide the solution of the inverse problem. The integration constants x_0 and y_0 determine the location of the reflector. The sign, which must be the same in both equations

determines whether the reflector is convex (+) or concave (-) toward the incident wave. In the concave case the specified $\sigma(\theta)$ is obtained only for a limited range of θ due to blocking of the reflected rays by the reflector itself.

As an example of the use of (3) and (4), let us suppose that

$$(5) \quad \sigma(\theta) = \frac{b}{2} R\left(\frac{\theta}{2}\right) \cos \frac{\theta}{2} .$$

Here b is a constant. Now (3) and (4) yield

$$(6) \quad x = x_0 \pm b \left[1 - \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \right]$$

$$(7) \quad y = y_0 \pm b \sin \frac{\theta}{2} .$$

These are the equations of a circle of radius b centered at $x_0 \pm b, y_0$. (See Fig. 2)

As a second example let a be a constant and suppose that

$$(8) \quad \sigma(\theta) = \frac{aR}{2} .$$

If R is constant then σ is independent of θ and the corresponding reflector is an isotropic scatterer. From (3) and (4) its equations are

$$(9) \quad x = x_0 \mp a \log \cos \frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$(10) \quad y = y_0 \pm \frac{a\theta}{2} .$$

In Fig. 3 this reflector is drawn, using (9) and (10) with the upper sign.

Equation (1) can also be used to solve the direct problem of scattering. If $b(\theta/2)$ denotes the radius of curvature of the reflector at the point where its normal points in the direction $\theta/2$ then simple geometry shows that

$$(11) \quad \frac{dy}{d\theta} = \frac{1}{2} b(\theta/2) \cos \frac{\theta}{2} .$$

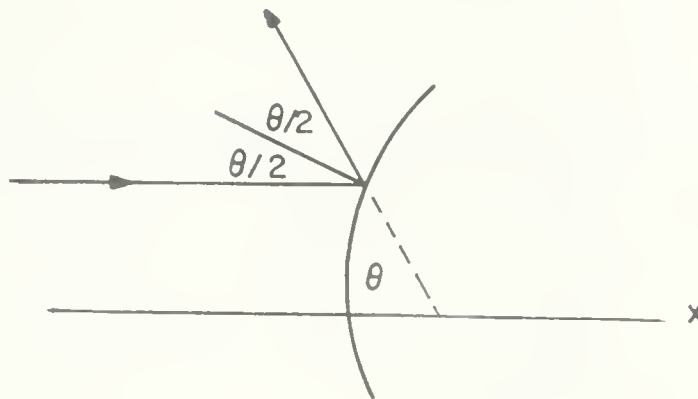


Fig. 1: Incident and reflected rays both making the angle $\theta/2$ with the normal to the reflector. The reflected ray makes the angle θ with the negative x-axis, along which the incident rays are incident. If the reflector is a surface of revolution, the figure represents a cross section containing the axis of revolution.

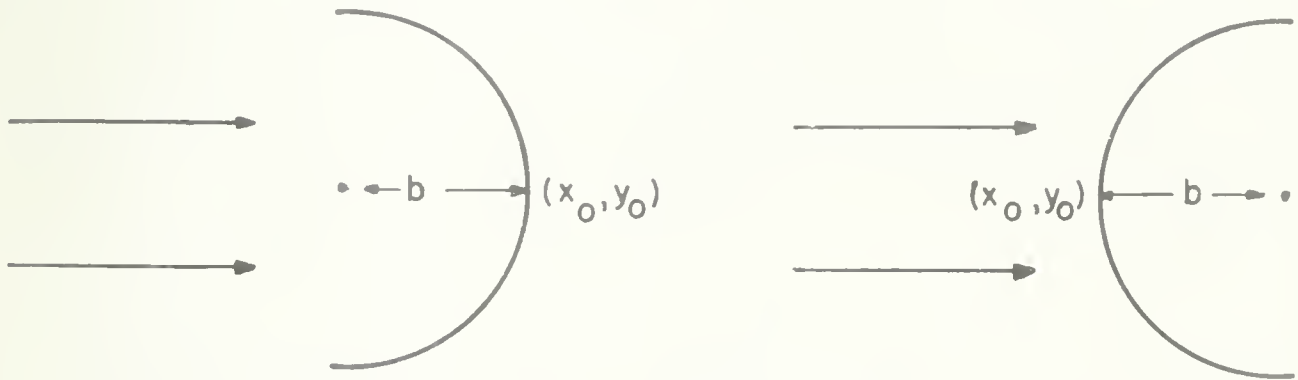


Fig. 2: A semicircular reflector of radius b which is either concave (A) or convex (B) to the incident wave. In both cases the differential scattering cross section is the same, being given by (5).

When (11) is used in (1), the result is

$$(12) \quad \sigma(\theta) = \frac{1}{2} R\left(\frac{\theta}{2}\right) b\left(\frac{\theta}{2}\right) \cos \frac{\theta}{2} .$$

This is the solution of the direct problem. It can be used in solving the inverse problem, but the method used above is simpler.

3. Other cases

By exactly the same methods as those used above we have also considered the direct and inverse problems for three other cases. These are the two dimensional case with an incident field due to a line source and the three dimensional case of a reflecting surface of revolution with a plane wave incident along the axis of revolution or with a point source located on this axis. The notation in the plane wave case is the same as in Fig. 1 except that r is used instead of y and z instead of x . For the line and point source cases the notation is explained in Fig. 4. In these cases ϕ denotes the angle of incidence and of reflection and α denotes the angle between the incident ray and the axis. These angles are related to θ by

$$(13) \quad \theta = 2\phi - \alpha .$$

The intensity on each incident ray is denoted by $I(\alpha)$ and the equation of the reflector is written as $\rho = \rho(\alpha)$ where the source is the origin. The results are given in the Table.

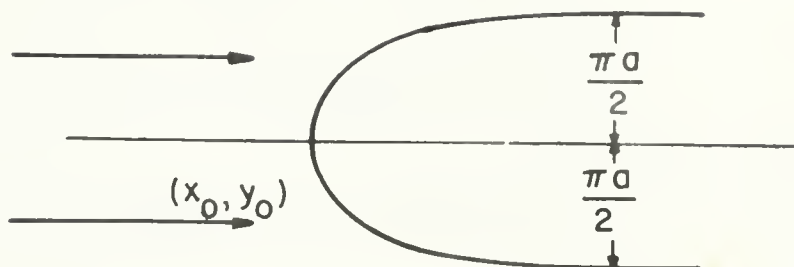


Fig. 3: An isotropic scatterer given by (9) and (10) with the upper sign. If the reflection coefficient R is constant, this reflector has the constant differential cross section $\sigma = aR/2$. Its width is asymptotically πa .

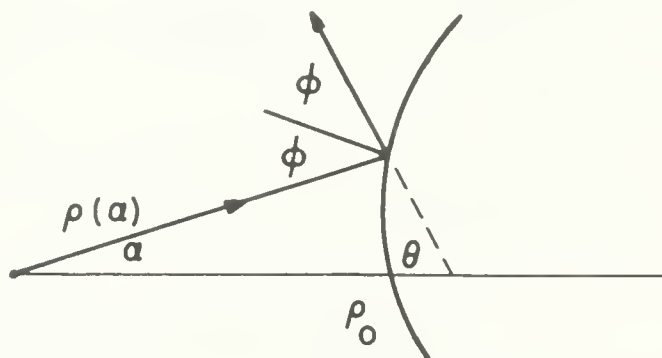


Fig. 4: An incident ray making the angle α with the x or z axis and the angle ϕ with the normal to the reflector. The reflected ray also makes the angle ϕ with the normal and the angle θ with the axis. The distance from the source to the reflector is $\rho(\alpha)$, and $\rho(0)$ is also denoted by ρ_0 .

Results for Inverse Scattering

Two dimensions, line source

$$\pm \sigma(\theta) d\theta = R(\varphi) I(\alpha) d\alpha$$

$$\rho^{-1} \frac{d\rho}{d\alpha} = \tan \frac{\alpha + \theta}{2}$$

If $R = \text{constant}$

$$\pm \int_{\theta_0}^{\theta} \sigma(\theta) d\theta = R \int_0^{\alpha} I(\alpha) d\alpha$$

$$\log \rho/\rho_0 = \int_0^{\alpha} \tan \frac{\alpha + \theta(\alpha)}{2} d\alpha$$

Rotational symmetry, plane wave

$$\sigma(\theta) \sin \theta d\theta = R(\frac{\theta}{2}) r dr$$

$$\frac{dr}{dz} = \pm \cot \frac{\theta}{2}$$

If $R = \text{constant}$

$$r^2 = 2 \int_0^{\theta} \frac{\sigma(\theta) \sin \theta}{R(\theta/2)} d\theta$$

$$z = z_0 \pm \int_0^{\theta} \frac{\sigma(\theta) \sin \theta \tan \frac{\theta}{2}}{R(\theta/2) r(\theta)} d\theta$$

Rotational symmetry, point source

$$\pm \sigma(\theta) \sin \theta d\theta = R(\varphi) I(\alpha) \sin \alpha d\alpha$$

$$\rho^{-1} \frac{d\rho}{d\alpha} = \tan \frac{\alpha + \theta(\alpha)}{2}$$

If $R = \text{constant}$

$$\pm \int_{\theta_0}^{\theta} \sigma(\theta) \sin \theta d\theta = R \int_0^{\alpha} I(\alpha) \sin \alpha d\alpha$$

$$\log \rho/\rho_0 = \int_0^{\alpha} \tan \frac{\alpha + \theta(\alpha)}{2} d\alpha$$

Results for Direct Scattering

Two dimensions, line source

$$\sigma(\theta) = R(\theta) I(a) \left[\frac{2\rho(a)}{b(a) \cos \theta} + 1 \right]^{-1}$$

Rotational symmetry, plane wave

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{r(\theta/2)}{2 \sin \theta} R(\theta/2) b(\theta/2) \cos \theta/2$$

Rotational symmetry, point source

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\sin a}{2 \sin \theta} R(\theta) I(a) \left[\frac{2\rho(a)}{b(a) \cos \theta} + 1 \right]^{-1} .$$

As an example let us consider the two dimensional case in which the field comes from a line source. Suppose that σ , I and R are constants and that $\theta_0 = 0$. Then from the table we have

$$(14) \quad \pm \sigma \theta = I R a$$

$$(15) \quad \rho = \rho_0 \left[\cos \left(1 \pm \frac{IR}{\sigma} \right) \frac{a}{2} \right]^{-2} (1 \pm (IR/\sigma))^{-1} .$$

Equation (15) is the polar equation of the reflector. If the positive sign is taken and if $IR = \sigma$ then it is the equation of a plane at distance ρ_0 from the source.

In the three dimensional case with rotational symmetry and a plane wave incident along the axis, let us seek a reflector for which σ and R are constants. From the table we find for its equation

$$(16) \quad r^2 = \frac{4\sigma}{R} \sin^2 \frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$(17) \quad z = z_0 \pm 2\sqrt{\sigma/R} \left(1 - \cos \frac{\theta}{2}\right)$$

This is the equation of a sphere of radius $2\sqrt{\sigma/R}$ centered at $r = 0$, $z = z_0 \pm 2\sqrt{\sigma/R}$. Thus we find the well-known result that the sphere is an isotropic scatterer - in fact the only one, in this case.

4. The general case

Suppose the reflector is an arbitrary smooth convex closed surface in three dimensional space. Let $\sigma(\theta, \phi)$ denote its differential scattering cross section in the direction θ, ϕ due to a plane wave of unit intensity incident from the left along the x-axis. Let $P(\theta, \phi)$ be the point on the reflector from which a ray is reflected in the θ, ϕ direction. Then the normal at $P(\theta, \phi)$ must point in the direction $\theta/2, \phi$ and the angle of incidence at P must be $\theta/2$. These facts follow from the law of reflection. Now it is well known that the differential scattering cross section in the direction of any reflected ray is equal to $R/4G$ where G is the Gaussian curvature at the point of reflection. Therefore we have

$$(18) \quad \sigma(\theta, \phi) = \frac{R(\frac{\theta}{2})}{4G(\frac{\theta}{2}, \phi)} .$$

Let us make use of (18) to analyze the inverse problem. We see that when σ and R are known for all values of their arguments, the Gaussian curvature G is determined over the hemisphere $0 \leq \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$ of the unit sphere. This unit sphere, each point of which corresponds to the direction of the normal at one point on the reflector surface, is called the spherical image of that surface. The problem of determining a surface when its Gaussian curvature is given on the entire

surface of the spherical image is known as Minkowski's problem.^[3] It has one and only one solution for any sufficiently smooth positive function $G(\theta, \phi)$ which satisfies the condition

$$(19) \quad \int G^{-1}(\theta, \phi) \vec{n}(\theta, \phi) d\Omega = 0.$$

Here $\vec{n}(\theta, \phi)$ is the unit normal at the point θ, ϕ ; $d\Omega$ is the element of area of the unit sphere and the integration extends over the whole sphere. Thus for any arbitrary (subject to (19)) smooth continuation over the rest of the sphere of the function G given on half the sphere by (18), there is exactly one reflector. The reflector shape is determined by the solution of an elliptic partial differential equation involving G . Therefore we may conclude that the shape of all parts of the reflector are effected by the arbitrary continuation of G . Consequently the data provided by (18) do not suffice to determine the shape of the reflector nor any part of it. The inverse problem has too large a family of solutions.

Suppose, however, that two functions $\sigma_+(\theta, \phi)$ and $\sigma_-(\theta, \phi)$ are given, corresponding to two different incident waves coming from opposite directions. If R is also known, then (18) determines G over the whole sphere. If this G satisfies (19) - as it must if it actually corresponds to a surface - then the inverse problem has a unique solution. The calculation of this solution, in the general case, requires the solution of an elliptic partial differential equation. In the cases treated in the previous sections this equation could be reduced to an ordinary differential equation. This explains why explicit solutions could be obtained in those cases.

References

- [1] J.B. Keller, I. Kay and J. Shmoys - Phys. Rev.; 102, No. 2, April 15, 1956, pp. 557-559.

The procedure of [1] requires the determination of $\theta(b)$ from $\sigma(\theta)$, which is possible if and only if at most one trajectory is scattered in each direction. Then $V(r)$ is found from $\theta(b)$ provided that $[1 - E^{-1}V(r)]r^2$ is a monotone increasing function of r for $r \geq r_{\min}(E)$. Monotonicity is required to permit the change of integration variable from u in (3) to w in (5). It also ensures that there are no bounded orbits in the region $r \geq r_{\min}(E)$, while without monotonicity there are such orbits. Thus $\theta(b)$ at energy E determines $V(r)$ for $r \geq r_{\min}(E)$ provided that there are no bound states at energy E in the region $r \geq r_{\min}(E)$. If there is such a bound state the method of [1] does not work, and it seems that it can be modified to show that $V(r)$ is then not uniquely determined by $\theta(b)$.

- [2] S. Silver, Ed. - Microwave Antenna Theory and Design (Rad. Lab. Series No. 12) McGraw-Hill, N.Y. (1949) pp. 497-500.

In this reference it is not made clear that the constant K is actually the reflection coefficient R .

- [3] L. Nirenberg - Comm. Pure and Appl. Math.; VI, No. 3, August 1953, pp. 337-394.

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